



GAY BUDDHIST Fellowship

SUMMER 2019 NEWSLETTER

the gay buddhist
fellowship supports
buddhist practice in the
gay men's community.
it is a forum that
brings together the
diverse buddhist
traditions to address
the spiritual concerns
of gay men in the
san francisco bay area,
the united states,
and the world.
gbf's mission includes
cultivating a social
environment that is
inclusive and caring.

The Three Types of Happiness

By John Martin

John Martin teaches vipassana, metta, and LGBTQI-themed meditation retreats. He leads an ongoing weekly Monday evening meditation group in the Castro, teaches both an advanced practitioner's program group and a dedicated practitioner's group, and is the co-guiding teacher for the LGBT-Queer sangha at the Insight Meditation Center in Redwood City. John serves on the Spirit Rock Teachers Council and the Governing Teachers Council. He has a dedicated practice while being engaged in the working world, and emphasizes practice for daily life. He completed SRMCIMSIRC, four-year teacher training in 2016. John served as a hospice volunteer for many years, first with Shanti Project, and more recently with the Zen Hospice Project.

Today, I'm going to speak about the three kinds of happiness that the Buddha referred to. This is a path of happiness. There is a lot of reference to *dukkha*, the unreliability, unsatisfactoriness, the suffering that is inherent to being a human being. But ultimately, it is a path that leads to a greater and greater happiness. Bhikkhu Analayo, the venerable Analayo, who is offering such great commentary on the teachings and translations of the teachings, emphasizes this quality of happiness coming forward in every step along the path.

It's interesting that the Buddha, who lived about 2600 years ago, was known in his time as the Happy One. Yet he had seen the suffering of the entire world, both in the time in which he lived, and, with the perfect eye of a Buddha, the suffering of the past and the suffering of the future. He could hold it all with a heart that was entirely open to compassion to that suffering and hold it in the balance of equanimity, the acceptance of things as they are. And with all of that, he was known as the Happy One, with a cooler, contented, peaceful kind of happiness present in his life.

So for all of us, we open to happiness. We open to the happiness of being more present just for the ordinary pleasures of our life. Maybe for the good meal you're going to have following this time together. Maybe for the happiness of being in sangha, in community. Or the happiness that comes with being outside on a beautiful day like this. This is happiness in the ordinary pleasures in life. We're more fully present, with our practice of being present in our bodies, being present with moment to moment awareness for these kinds of simple pleasures.

Then we begin to open to a greater happiness that's not so dependent on the conditions of our lives or the conditions of the world, where we begin to find a peace, a contentment, maybe in the midst of being sick, maybe in the midst of watching the national news and seeing what's going on. We begin to be less affected by the external conditions of the world. And we begin to hold it all with balance, the equanimity that came forward for the Buddha, this quality of accepting the present moment as it is and recognizing it's like this, this moment is like this. It is a very deep, heartfelt acceptance of the way things are.

And then we begin to open to an even greater happiness that transcends all conditions. This is the direction of our practice that transcends all conditions of the world. Along the path of practice our hearts open up. The Buddhist practice is a wisdom practice, seeing and knowing things as they are, and it's a heart practice. The heart opens up and it becomes a rich practice

It's interesting that the Buddha, who lived about 2600 years ago, was known in his time as the Happy One. He had seen the suffering of the entire world. But he could hold it all with a heart that was open to compassion and hold it in the balance of equanimity. So, with all of that, he was known as the Happy One, with a cooler, contented, peaceful kind of happiness present in his life.

where the beautiful qualities of empathetic joy, *mudita*, and compassion, *karuna*, can come forward very naturally.

I make this practice. I live right in the Castro and a half block from Market Street, which is a busy street, of course. There's a lot of suffering, a lot more homeless than ever, and there's also a lot of joy. People on the street, people walking their dogs, friends being together. It's a rich place for me to practice, on Market Street. I don't always remember, by any means, but it's a practice of remembering, coming back into the present moment. So I'll watch.

Just this morning, I was walking my dog Gandalf, and I saw a lot of homeless people. I walked by one homeless person, with all this trash strewn around them. I felt this aversion, felt the heart close. I felt anger at what I was seeing. So what's going on? I check. There's aversion, there's anger. Once I could be present for that, then the heart opened up and I could feel some human connection and see this was a human being who was greatly suffering--I think tweaking and probably with a severe addiction. It wasn't like an overwhelming kind of compassion; I just felt some sense of heart connection that came forth from being present.

When we're present and there's suffering, whether it's our own suffering or the suffering of others, compassion is a spontaneous response of the heart. It recognizes suffering. This can be a rich practice, just to pay attention to the questions, "Is there suffering?" and "Is there compassion?" Maybe the next time you're feeling back pain or neck pain when you're sitting in meditation, check it out: Is there discomfort? Is there compassion? Sometimes just the simple acknowledgement that I'm suffering—"This is suffering"—that simple acknowledgement usually brings forth compassion. It's interesting how *mudita*, the quality of empathetic joy, is such a next-door neighbor to compassion, this immediate responsiveness of the heart that recognizes the happiness of others and wishes it to continue.

I think of His Holiness the Dalai Lama as really embodying these qualities of happiness. He's known as being very playful with the ordinary pleasures of life, and he has this quality of understanding the way things are, recognizing the impermanence of everything in our human experience, and he doesn't fall into reactivity. He's able even to recognize the Chinese government senior officials who took his country of Tibet away. He calls them his friends, "My friends, the enemy." This is a quality of great peace. He's not overcome by ill will or hatred.

We all have this potentiality of awakening to the deepest freedom and happiness. The Buddha refers to this as *garba*, the Pali word for the embryonic potential for awakening that's within every being. "Buddha nature" is a way to describe this. Every being has this right to awaken to this deeper happiness that transcends the conditions of the world. We are all on the path. The Buddha said there's no getting off the path. You're on the path. Can't get off. Even if you stop meditating for a few years, you're still on the path. And the path leads in one direction. And we all benefit from the practice.

I will particularly emphasize in my talk today the importance of opening and appreciating the happiness that comes forward in our

practice. So, there is suffering, and that's part of the practice. I was pointing out the aversion, anger that arises in my practice sometimes when I walk on Market Street and see the suffering. But when we open to see that suffering, it supports the clearer seeing, supports the purification of the heart, supports the release of the heart. It's captured well in this quote from Bishop Desmond Tutu,

We were meant to live in joy. This does not mean that life will be easy or painless. It means we can turn our faces to the wind and accept that this is a storm we must pass through.

We are required to turn toward whatever is present and trust the practice, trust the purification process that will follow, and then it leads to a greater happiness.

So, the three kinds of happiness. For those of you who are into the Buddhist texts, I'm referring to the *Samyutta Nikaya*, 36:31, where the Buddha speaks about the three kinds of happiness. And I'm also drawing from instructions from one of my teachers, Philip Moffitt. I mentioned the first kind is the happiness of the simple pleasures of the world, of good food, friends, nature, hearing good music, having a cup of tea. The Buddha didn't deny these simple pleasures. Buddha's teachings are a Middle Way practice. He doesn't call for either an extreme asceticism or overindulgence. He acknowledges there's a pleasure, a happiness from these simple pleasures, but that often we end up clinging, holding on, trying to make these simple pleasures permanent.

The second kind of happiness is based more on understanding, understanding the way things are, recognizing the impermanent nature of all experiences. And it's based on accepting that the present circumstance is as it is and can't be different.

And then there's the happiness that's entirely independent of any condition of the world. It's the ultimate transcendence of the material condition, not dependent on health, relationships, finances, politics, anything else. I'll give more details today about these three kinds of happiness and offer some tools to support bringing forth more happiness and joy in our practice.

I think I'll tell a story. It's one of my favorite stories, the story of meeting His Holiness the Dalai Lama. It makes me feel happy just reflecting on it.

About 12 years ago, I was working at the airport. I had worked there for many years, and had been practicing for about six or seven years. One of the police officers who I knew at the airport told me His Holiness the Dalai Lama would be coming through and that he could arrange for me to see him when he got off the plane. So I arranged to go into the airport and meet him on a Saturday morning. He came in on a Japan Airlines flight from Tokyo, traveling all the way from India, so he'd probably been traveling for close to 18, maybe 20 hours, a very long day.

I met him at the bottom of the stairs on the airplane, because as a head of state, he doesn't have to go through customs like the rest of us. I expected there to be a lot of people from his Tibetan Buddhist community to meet him, but with the new security regula-

tions at that time, there were only his own secret service, US Secret Service, and police. There were probably about 30 people there, with only two of us who were not carrying guns, His Holiness the Dalai Lama and myself! He came down the stairs after that long trip, and he was just radiating kindness and happiness, and a sense of peace. He was clearly someone who had realized this deeper happiness, so that even with the loss of his own country, he's a source of happiness and joy in the world.

So he came down the stairs and I bowed to him and he took my hand. I didn't expect it, but the police officer had a camera and took our photo together, and while the photo was being taken, I told His Holiness the Dalai Lama that I was a practitioner, and he nodded. Then he walked to his car slowly, maybe 60 or 70 feet, to a little motorcade of about five cars. He was about ready to get into the car when he looked back toward me, and I thought, "He can't be looking at me!" But what do you do when His Holiness the Dalai Lama is looking at you? I bowed to him, and he waved me over and took my hand again and just said, "Tell me, I want to know, how long have you been practicing?"

That's the whole story. That he was so present that he could feel the importance of my meeting him, and that he had this natural compassion, recognizing my suffering, recognizing my wish to practice and my desire to realize the end of that suffering. And that he was so generous after that long day of travel to take the time to call me over and show his kindness. I didn't realize that the police officer took a whole series of photos as the motorcade was pulling away, but as I thought about them later, I believed I have a look of the deepest equanimity that I have ever seen on my own face. A sense of peace from having had that contact with His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

So, for all of us, we open to happiness. The first kind is the happiness of the simple pleasures of the world. The second kind of happiness is based more on understanding... understanding the way things are, and accepting that the present circumstance is as it is and can't be different. And then there's the third happiness that's entirely independent of any condition of the world, where we begin to open to an even greater happiness that transcends all conditions... a complete letting go, where there's no hanging on whatsoever.

So, here are some supports for bringing forth happiness.

Gratitude. I often like to begin, when I provide instructions for meditation, with opening to gratitude, because it brings forth joy. Anlayo often begins guided meditations with instructions on gratitude. When we're grateful for what we have, it brings forth a sense of enough-ness, like, "I have enough in life to be happy." Gratitude for whatever degree of good health we might have. Gratitude for the Dharma. Gratitude for the miracle of having a meal every time we sit down to eat. So many things to be grateful for. Just living in San Francisco is something I continue to be grateful for. Gratitude supports a sense of settling in, contentment, acceptance.

I'll share three quotes on gratitude.

First from Maya Angelou,

Let gratitude be the pillow upon which you kneel to say your nightly prayer.

This is what I was suggesting, opening to gratitude with each meditation sitting, like a foundation for practice. She goes on to say,

And let faith be the bridge you build to overcome evil and welcome good.

"Faith," in the Buddhist understanding means, "trusting of the heart."

Here's a quote from Brother Steindl-Rast,

It is not happiness that makes us grateful. It is gratefulness that makes us happy. Every moment is a gift.

He has a lot of beautiful quotes on gratitude, if you look online.

And then from this wise figure, Piglet, in *Winnie the Pooh*,

Piglet noted that even though he had a Very Small Heart, he could hold a rather large amount of Gratitude.

When we're present in our bodies, in our lives, we open to more and more of these moments of gratitude, and therefore more and more moments of joy. The beautiful qualities of our own heart--they're already there, the qualities of loving-kindness, compassion, equanimity--just very naturally come forward. And we connect with other human beings. When our hearts open with gratitude for what we have, somehow we open up to see that we're all connected. We're all so completely interconnected in life. We're connected in the things we're all grateful for. And we're connected to other beings in suffering--every being subject to old age, sickness, and death; every being wanting happiness, safety, health, and ease just as we do. Every being, without exception. We really open our hearts to this human connection.

Another great source of happiness comes as we harmonize our words and our actions in the world, to be in harmony with our own heart's deepest wishes, to be in the world in a non-harming way and a supportive way for others. This is often described as ethical behavior, but I much prefer the word "harmony," harmonizing our words and actions to be in harmony with other beings and in harmony with society. The Buddha used the words, "the bliss of blamelessness," which comes forward when we're in harmony with our own hearts.

From Gandhi,

Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony.

And from His Holiness the Dalai Lama,

Happiness isn't ready made. It comes from actions.

Emphasizing the importance of actions.

And in my own practice, with the happiness that comes forth, I really bring the deepest attention to my intentions in the world. It was shortly after I met His Holiness the Dalai Lama that I made the decision to bring the practice to the whole of my life, and the

key aspect in bringing the practice to the whole of my life has been practicing with wise intention, checking if there's an intention of kindness, an intention of non-harming, and an intention of letting go, of not getting caught up in needing things to be a particular way.

So, a little bit more on all three kinds of happiness.

There's the first kind of happiness, happiness based on conditions. Philip Moffitt calls this *sukha-dukkha*, *sukha* meaning "well-being," but *dukkha* because it's ultimately not reliable, because things are constantly changing. We can't hang onto these things. I think when I came into practice 19 years ago, I had a lot of well-being, a lot of *sukha* in my life. Good job, great partner/husband that I'm still with, a lot of good things in life. But the feeling was that there had to be something more. There was some deep sense of un-satisfactoriness that maybe you can connect with as well, like this calling for a deeper happiness that transcends the conditions of the world.

I think of His Holiness the Dalai Lama as really embodying these qualities of happiness. He has this quality of understanding the way things are, recognizing the impermanence of everything in our human experience, and he doesn't fall into reactivity. He's able even to recognize the Chinese government senior officials who took his country of Tibet away. He calls them his friends, "My friends, the enemy."

We enjoy these ordinary pleasures when we're more present, when we're more present in our bodies. Here's a quote from James Joyce, who wrote in *Dubliners*,

Mr. Duffy lived a short distance from his body.

We can all connect to this. When we keep returning to our bodies, when we're present in our bodies, we can enjoy the moments of happiness more, the pleasure.

I was at the ballet on Friday night with my partner, and the mind was doing its thing, wandering away from enjoying the ballet. So the tool I was connecting with was: reconnect with the body, feel the butt on the seat, feel the feet on the floor. Then I could be present to enjoy the ballet, to enjoy the beautiful dancing. That's the tool we have, to keep returning to the moment to moment experience throughout our whole lives. With the practice of presence, of being present for our lives, we can enjoy these moments without hanging on to them, to know they're temporary and just enjoy them.

I think this quote captures it really well, some wise words from Dr. Seuss,

Don't cry because it's over. Smile because it happened.

In other words, just enjoy what happened without clinging to it. It's a matter of just returning again and again to this practice of present awareness, to the practice of being in the body.

Sharon Salzberg:

Mindfulness isn't difficult.
We just need to remember to do it.

Remembering again and again.

This first kind of happiness the Buddha labeled "carnal happiness." It's at the sense doors, the sense pleasures.

The second kind of happiness the Buddha called "spiritual happiness." Philip Moffitt labels it *anicca-sukha*. *Sukha* "well-being," *anicca*, "impermanence." It recognizes these pleasures, our happiness, as temporary. This second kind of happiness is based upon the attitude of the mind. It really more deeply recognizes the transitory nature of experience. It recognizes the present moment can't be any different than it is. It's such a source of suffering when we try to make the present moment different. It may be that there's an injustice or something we need to speak about and take action on in the next moment. But when we accept the present circumstance as it is, we open to peace.

A lot of the great world/spiritual leaders are people who recognize the injustice but also have the wisdom to recognize their present circumstance can't be different. Leaders like Nelson Mandela and His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Gandhi recognize with a peaceful acceptance, this is the way it is. *Now* appropriate action is necessary, but first they held it all, held the present moment, with that deep sense of equanimity.

So for all of us, the way this manifests is we can face difficulties in our lives. We have the sense that our health isn't perfect, but we can see that our happiness is not dependent on having perfect health. We see our happiness isn't necessarily dependent on who's in the elected offices in our country. We can find happiness even when our finances or our relationships may be difficult, as we accept things as they are. Sometimes we get caught up. But with our practice we can see where the mind gets caught and then release.

A few months ago, the day before Thanksgiving, I came down with a sinus infection, and I thought, I could rest all day and be there for the great dinner a friend of ours was cooking the next day. We weren't even going to have to bring anything. This was a great Thanksgiving dinner, and she's a great cook, a professional cook. But I woke up Thanksgiving Day and I was just bed-ridden, I was so sick. And the mind was really spinning. "What did I do wrong? Why didn't I take better care of myself? Why is it happening now?" I was shooting that second arrow you may hear referred to in the teaching, which is the resistance, the clinging, the reactivity to the present circumstance.

So eventually, after a few hours, I went, "Oh yeah, I have this practice. Return to the body. What's going on? A whole lot of reactivity. Oh. I'm suffering. I'm suffering." Allowing some sense of compassion to come forward. So I couldn't go to the dinner. My partner tried to call Uber and have them deliver some food to me from the dinner, but they don't do that. So my Thanksgiving dinner was a peanut butter sandwich and an orange. That was all that was in the refrigerator. And I was happy. It wasn't an overflowing kind of happiness, but I felt basic peace because I wasn't caught in reactivity. This happiness is not so dependent on conditions.

This is captured in this quote by Ajahn Chah,

Try to be mindful and let things take their natural course. Then your mind will become still. Problems will arise, and you will see through them immediately. This is the happiness of the Buddha.

So, we begin to see more clearly what leads to happiness and what leads to suffering. And that, actually, the greatest happiness is not in the material conditions of the world. And that the cause of suffering is a clinging and wanting things to be a particular way. Trying to make what is pleasant, what is pleasurable, permanent. But it can't be made permanent.

We all have this potentiality of awakening to the deepest freedom and happiness. The Buddha said there's no getting off the path. You're on the path. Even if you stop meditating for a few years,

We cling to having perfect health, cling to wanting all of the people in our lives to behave the way we want them to behave. Getting all the people elected to office in our country that can really make the right changes in our country. If we cling to those things, we suffer. If we make our happiness dependent on those things, we suffer. If we don't cling--when we don't cling to anything whatsoever--peace is possible in any moment, even in moments of great physical discomfort, even in the midst of the ill-will and hatred that is so prevalent in our country right now. We can be at peace in any moment that is non-clinging. It's the Third Noble Truth. Peace is possible.

I want to share another story. I found this on the internet recently, a story that brings me happiness in sharing about how when we are present, when even a child is present, the way of gratitude and kindness and compassion naturally come forward. This is the story of a nine-year old, Cheikh Faizal, who was walking with his father in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, through a train station. There were a lot of homeless people in this transit station—it's the same all over the world, transit stations are gathering places for the homeless. And this nine-year-old child saw another child with his mother, about his same age, and the child was barefoot.

This nine-year-old, Cheikh, ran over to the other child, took off his shoes and socks, and put them on him, and then kissed the homeless child on each cheek. The natural responsiveness of kindness, compassion and generosity coming forward. Of course, in the internet age, it was filmed. And Cheikh's father commented on how proud he was of his son's compassion. He said, "My son saw the young boy without shoes and made the decision to help him. He showed his love for everyone there, even though they are homeless. He went home without his own shoes." And he said, "There are many homeless people, but if everybody makes a small gesture of kindness, we can improve their lives."

The third kind of happiness is this transcendent happiness that Philip calls *sukha-sukha*. You could call it happiness squared! Deepest happiness. Deep bliss, beyond bliss. One of the terms Buddha uses to describe this is "spiritual equanimity." There's a deep understanding at this level of the truth of the way things are, that everything we know and love in the world is completely impermanent, that there is nothing to cling to whatsoever, and the understanding that if we cling to anything at all, there is suffering. We let go of the self-identification, all self-identification, at this level of understanding. So, it's a deepest letting go.

Here's a quote from Thich Nhat Hanh,

Letting go gives us freedom, and freedom is the only condition for happiness. If in our hearts we still cling to anything--anger, anxiety, possessions--we cannot be free.

We all open to these moments of happiness. But these profound moments of happiness we can also often miss. They can be small and short, but they really are supporting an opening to a more lasting, the deepest, level, where it becomes kind of an unshakable happiness. We can see these moments of complete letting go, when there's no hanging onto the future, no grasping onto something of the past. When we're completely present, not any clinging whatsoever, we have these moments of a great peace, a great contentment.

It might be a moment of taking off your shoe! You're in the midst of taking off your shoe and, "Ah!" A great peace. One time when a lot of people can experience it is in seeing a sunset. We can see a beautiful sunset on the beach. We know it's not going to last...no one thinks a sunset is going to last...you can't cling to a sunset! But just being present to that beauty in that moment, it's a moment of freedom.

And then there's sharing those moments of happiness with others. When we share our happiness, it's contagious. When we're around people who are happy, we can feel our own happiness open up, too.

Once in a while I experience it when my favorite dancer of the ballet, Yuan Yuan Tan, who has been doing it for, like, twenty-four years, is dancing. There's something that just releases in seeing her dancing that transcends even the momentary awareness. It goes beyond. It might be when we're right in the midst of someone's dying or of some great suffering. Maybe we receive a serious health diagnosis ourselves. There can sometimes be this moment of complete letting go. You wouldn't normally describe that as a happiness, but it's a kind of peace or contentment that goes beyond the ordinary world.

So, in conclusion, I want to emphasize the importance of recognizing both the simple, ordinary moments of happiness—don't cling to those, just accept them as moments. And then appreciating the moments of happiness that come forward with the attitude of the mind, when we recognize that the present circumstance can't be different than it is, when we begin to open to this happiness that's not so dependent on the conditions of the world. And then appreciating those moments of a complete letting go, where there's no hanging on whatsoever. And then sharing those moments of happiness with others. When we share our happiness, it's contagious. We can feel this ourselves. When we're around people who are happy, we can feel our own happiness open up too.

I want to end with a quote from Plato, who said in *The Republic*,

He who is of a calm and happy nature will hardly feel the pressure of age. But to him who is of an opposite disposition, youth and age are equally a burden.

GBF

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Sunday Sittings

10:30 am to 12 noon

Every Sunday at 10:30am we meditate together for 30 minutes, followed by a talk or discussion till 12pm. Everyone is then welcome to stay and socialize over refreshments till approximately 12:30pm, after which those who are interested usually go somewhere local for lunch. Our sittings are held at the San Francisco Buddhist Center, 37 Bartlett Street (look for the red door near 21st St between Mission and Valencia Streets).

MUNI: 14 Mission or 49 Van Ness-Mission, alight at 21st St, walk 1/2 block

BART: 24th and Mission, walk 3 1/2 blocks

PARKING: on street (meters free on Sundays) or in adjacent New Mission Bartlett Garage. The Center is handicapped accessible.

Your Thrift Store Donations Earn Money for GBF

GBF members can donate their quality cast-offs to the Community Thrift Store (CTS) and GBF will receive a quarterly check based on the volume of items sold. This is a great way to support our Sangha, and the community. So far this year we have received over \$800 through members' generosity. Bring your extra clothing and other items to CTS at 623 Valencia St between 10am and 5pm, any day of the week. The donation door is around the corner on Sycamore Alley (parallel to and between 17th and 18th) between Valencia and Mission. Tell the worker you are donating to GBF. Our ID number is 40.

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Sunday Speakers

June 2 Larry Robinson

Larry Robinson has been a practicing Buddhist for 47 years, mostly in the Zen and Vipassana traditions. He is a member of the Occidental Laguna Sangha in Sebastopol, studying with Bruce Fortin in the lineage of Suzuki Roshi. A long-time environmental and social justice activist, he is a retired ecopsychologist and former mayor of Sebastopol. He serves on the board of directors of the Center for Climate Protection and the board of trustees of Meridian University. His “large and foolish project” (in the words of Rumi) is to restore the soul of the world through reawakening the oral tradition of poetry. He is also the founder and producer of Rumi’s Caravan.

June 9 Samuel Schindler

The Enneagram: A map of human consciousness offering a gateway to deeper intimacy with ourselves and the people in our lives. Samuel Schindler is certified in the Enneagram Studies in the Narrative Tradition (ESNT)—Helen Palmer and David Daniels. His Enneagram studies include the Deep Coaching Institute and Deep Living Institute under Roxanne Howe-Murphy; Riso-Hudson Enneagram Institute coursework; and study with Sandra Maitri. Samuel has over thirty years professional experience in teaching, training, conflict resolution, and employee coaching. He is a long-time student of the Diamond Approach Path and his work now includes Personal Development/Life Coaching. For more information visit: www.samuelschindler.com/enneagram

June 16 Open Discussion

June 23 Laura Burges

Ryuko Laura Burges, a lay entrusted Buddhist teacher in the Soto Zen tradition, lectures and leads retreats at different practice centers in Northern California. A teacher of children for over 30 years, she trains other teachers to bring mindfulness practice into the elementary classroom. Laura co-founded the Sangha in Recovery program at Zen Center and has a particular interest in the intersection of Buddhism and Recovery. She is the abiding teacher at the Lenox House meditation group in Oakland.

June 30 Donald Rothberg

Donald Rothberg, Ph.D., has practiced Insight Meditation since 1976, and has also received training in Tibetan Dzogchen and Mahamudra practice, the Hakomi approach to body-based psychotherapy, and trauma work. He regularly teaches insight and lovingkindness meditation, and on transforming the judgmental mind, mindful communication and wise speech, working skillfully with conflict, and socially engaged Buddhism. He is the author of *The Engaged Spiritual Life: A Buddhist Approach to Transforming Ourselves and the World*.

July 7 Open Discussion

July 14 David Lewis

David Lewis has been following the dharma path for 45 years and has a degree in comparative religious studies. He teaches Insight Meditation and enjoys sharing the dharma at several sanghas around the Bay Area. He is a proud long time member of GBF.

July 21 Gary Ost

Gary Ost is a retired Episcopal priest living in San Francisco. He began his study of the dharma in 2008, starting with the Shambhala school of Tibetan Buddhism. Since then he has practiced daily samatha-vipassana meditation. He has declared his aspiration to help Christians understand Buddhism better and Buddhists to understand Christianity better. Gary has taken informal bodhisattva vows, and is studying the Lojong teachings of the 11th Century Tibetan monk Atisha.

July 28 Laura Burges

A continuation from Laura’s talk on June 23.

August 4 Tom Moon

Tom Moon has been a practitioner of Vipassana meditation for fifteen years, and his spiritual home is Spirit Rock Meditation Center. He is a psychologist in San Francisco, working primarily with gay men. His chief commitment is in exploring the interface between Buddhist practice and psychotherapy.

August 11 JD Doyle

JD Doyle serves as a Core Teacher at the East Bay Meditation Center (EBMC) and has served as a Board member and was the co-founder of the LGBTQI meditation group. JD is in the Spirit Rock Meditation Center teacher-training program and was in the Dedicated Practitioner Program (DPP2) and the Community Dharma Leader Program (CDL4). JD has practiced Buddhism since 1995 in the U.S., Thailand, and Burma. For over twenty-five years, they worked as a public school teacher focusing on issues of equity and access. JD holds a Bachelors degree in Environmental Studies from Cornell University and a Masters degree in Language and Literacy and Sociocultural Studies from the University of New Mexico. JD identifies as gender non-conforming. They are committed to celebrating the diversity of our human sangha, addressing the impact of racism on our communities, expanding concepts of gender, and living in ways that honor the sacredness of the Earth.

August 18 Rev. Keiryu Liên Shutt

Rev. Keiryu Liên Shutt is a Dharma Heir of Zenkei Blanche Hartman in the tradition of Shunryu Suzuki Roshi. Born into a Buddhist family in Vietnam, she began her meditation practice in the Insight tradition of Spirit Rock. She was a founding member of the Buddhists of Color in 1998. Her Soto Zen training began at Tassajara monastery where she lived from 2002-2005; after which, she practiced monastically in Japan and Vietnam. Drawing from her monastic experiences, she endeavors to share ways in which the deep settledness of traditional practices can be brought into everyday life. Liên’s strength as a teacher is in making Zen practice accessible to all.

August 25 Open Discussion

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By the power and truth of this practice, may all beings have happiness and the causes of happiness, may all be free from sorrow and the causes of sorrow, may all never be separated from the sacred happiness which is without sorrow, and may all live in equanimity, without too much attachment or too much aversion, believing in the equality of all that lives.

—GBF Dedication of Merit